

Book List—Getting Ideas

Here are some ways writers get their ideas, followed by a list of picture books that demonstrate.

Writers write about their memories

- When I Was Little by Jamie Lee Curtis
- When I Was Young in the Mountains by Cynthia Rylant
- Come On, Rain! by Karen Hesse

Writers write about special places in their lives

- Bigmama's by Donald Crews
- Shortcut by Donald Crews
- What You Know First by Patricia MacLachlan

Writers write about special people in their lives

- The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant
- It's Going to be Perfect by Nancy Carlson
- The Tenth Good Thing About Barney by Judith Viorst
- Hairs/Pelitos by Sandra Cisneros

Writers write about one moment in time

- Puddles by Jonathan London
- All the Small Poems and Fourteen More by Valerie Worth
- Fireflies by Julie Brinkloe
- Owl Moon by Jane Yolen
- Night Whispers by Angela Johnson

- The Daddy Mountain by Jules Feiffer

Writers write to give important information

Recipes

Vegetable Soup by Ann Morris
Pancakes for Breakfast by Tomie DePaola
Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert

Signs and labels

Signs by Tana Hoban
Night at the Fair by Donald Crews

Writers write about their wonderings

- Where Do Balloons Go? By Jamie Lee Curtis
- What is the Sun? by Reeve Lindbergh

Writers get ideas from their dreams or imagination

- Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak
- Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson

Writers write poetry and songs

Songs

One Sun by Raffi
Shake Your Sillies Out by Raffi

Poems

All the Small Poems by Valerie Worth
Honey, I Love by Eloise Greenfield
Song and Dance by Lee Bennett Hopkins

Writers write about writing
Do Not Open This Book! By Michaela Muntean

Here are some favorite picture books and ways (or reasons) to use them throughout the year. (You will notice that the same titles come up over and over again. Think of your books like the outfits you pack for traveling—they should work for many purposes.)

Come On, Rain! By Karen Hesse

- Memory writing
- Descriptive language
- Good for setting
- Comparisons
- Characterization
- Dialogue
- Good use of verbs
- Alliteration
- Good for punctuation study
- Twist at the end
- Use of senses

My Mama Had a Dancing Heart by Libba Moore Gray

- Memory writing
- Beautiful, fun language
- Circular ending (ends the way it starts)
- Shows memories through the seasons
- Repetition

Our Granny by Margaret Wild

- A list book
- Interesting pattern of repetition
- Great illustrations
- A topic children often write about

What You Know First by Patricia MacLachlan

- Memory writing
- Descriptive language
- Memories from objects
- Repetition

Fireflies by Julie Brinkloe

- Memory writing
- Repetition
- Beautiful language
- Interesting illustrations
- Moment in time

Pelitos/Hairs by Sandra Cisneros

- Good example of vignette that was turned into a picture book
- Lots of emotion
- Family relationships
- Memory writing

Words by Bill Martin, Jr.

- Gets kids thinking about words
- Fun and easy
- Can connect to kids' own thinking about how words are stretched out (are words long or short?)

Yo? Yes! By Chris Raschka

- Good for punctuation study
- Good for teaching dialogue

Night at the Fair

- Labels
- Descriptive
- Author puts himself into the story
- Lots of details (especially in the illustrations)

Supermarket by Kathleen Krull

- Good for list-like sentences
- Non-fiction (uses labels and text boxes and sidebars)
- Wrap-up kind of ending (summary)

I Fly by Anne Rockwell

- Memory
- Present tense
- Lots of intricate details
- Is a tale of what it's like to fly in a plane

Sweet, Sweet Memory by Jacqueline Woodson

- Memory writing
- Beautiful language
- Repetition
- Dialogue
- Shows movement across place and time

Puddles by Jonathan London

- Writing about a topic only kids would write about
- Moment in time
- Circular ending
- Onomatopoeia
- Sense memories

Enemy Pie by Derek Munson

- Memory writing
- Funny
- Picture book study
- good characterization
- dialogue
- good beginning
- good ending
- inner thoughts
- voice

The Relatives Came

- Memory writing
- Sense memories
- Picture book study

In My Family by Carmen Garza

- Snapshot book
- Memories connected by a group of people

Birthday Presents by Cynthia Rylant

- Time line format
- Memories connected by recurring event

In My Momma's Kitchen by Jerdine Nolen

- Different memories connected by setting

Stringbean's Trip to the Shining Sea by Vera B. Williams

- Postcard format linked by a journey—can be used to show a love of writing—creative way of writing

The Dot by Peter Reynolds

- Introduce writer's workshop
- Teach children to sketch an idea
- Teach how to sketch an idea of a memorable moment and start writing from that moment
- Develops writing by starting with a word, building an idea that grows into a sentence, and that sentence grows into a paragraph

I Will Never, Not Ever, Eat a Tomato by Lauren Childs

- Dialogue
- Repetition
- Imagination to change daily things into creative things

I Love Boats by Flora McDonnell

- Personal narrative turning into nonfiction
- Focus on details
- -ing endings

My Friend John by Charlotte Zolotow

- Small moments
- Where do writers get ideas
- Compare/contrast

The Important Book by Margaret Wise Brown

- Inspiration for poetry
- Observations

The Hello, Goodbye Window by Norton Juster

- Caldecott Winner
- Descriptions
- Observations
- Good detail

Jeremy's Muffler by Laura Nielsen

- Exaggeration
- Examples
- Good details
- Good for story structure

Our Class Took a Trip to the Zoo by Shirley Neitzel

- Cumulative (keeps adding on)
- Rebus book

My Grandma is Coming to Town by Anna Grossnickle Hines

- Writers write about people

The Reluctant Flower Girl by Lynne Barasch

- Author's note tells that story is based on real experience
- Examples
- Simile
- Dialogue

In My Heart by Molly Bang

- Author uses "you" voice
- Different, inventive illustrations, layout
- Repetition

Flip Flop Bop by Matt Novak

- Fun language play

A Winter Walk by Lynne Barasch

- Observations

Snuggle Mountain

- Moment in time
- Strong verbs

Pajama Day by Thor Wickstrom

- Funny
- Repetition
- Dialogue
- Strong verbs

The Adventures of Max and Pinky:
Best Buds by Maxwell Eaton III

- Funny
- Talk/think bubbles
- Circular ending
- Writers write about people

How to be a Baby by Sally Lloyd-James

- Funny
- Voice
- "you" voice
- Lists embedded within text

One Hot Summer Day by Nina Crews

- Short, simple text
- Good use of photos
- Urban setting
- Personal narrative
- Author's note explains that it is based on memories

Do Not Open This Book! by Michaela Muntean

- Funny
- Engages the reader by asking questions and telling the reader what to do
- Underlined words for emphasis
- Big and bold
- Talk bubbles

Night Shift Daddy by Eileen Spinelli

- Writing about a memory
- Beautiful language
- Simple text
- Flip-flop story (role reversal between father and daughter)

Sometimes I'm Bombaloo by Rachel Vail

- Writers write about feelings
- Funny
- Simple text
- Interesting use of font
- Good ending

My Mother's Sari by Sandhya Rao

- Simple text
- Beautiful collage illustrations
- Includes how-to piece
- Writing about an object

Underwear Do's and Don'ts by Todd Parr

- Funny
- Very simple
- See-saw text
- Good wrap up ending

(Look for other Todd Parr books as well)